

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. By only airing political commentary in line with the political affiliation of the top executives in Sinclair, Sinclair is using the public's own domain to stifle free speech. I cannot think of a more intolerable violation of the First Amendment. As a citizen of the United States, I am deeply troubled and concerned by these actions. The founders of our nation certainly fought for the right of all citizens to speak their mind in public. They did not create the right of free speech for citizens who had the power or clout to obliterate the speech of other citizens.

When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Thank you.